

different by jakepurralta

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M

Language: English

Characters: Jonathan Byers, Nancy Wheeler

Relationships: Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2017-02-08

Updated: 2017-05-22

Packaged: 2022-04-02 00:33:41

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 7

Words: 1,866

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Nancy's life is different.

1. different

It's not the same.

The way he smiles at you, but you quietly note that it no longer sets your insides aflame the way it used to.

Things are different.

Interacting with him only stirs feelings of unfamiliarity. He holds you in his arms and shares that warmth that you so craved a month ago, but it no longer affects you. You feel dazed and alienated from him, like your body is there but your soul is elsewhere.

You spent the first two months of that life changing week telling yourself that you'll go back to your old self, that it's understandable that things feel a little foreign at the moment, that you two have seemingly drifted off into becoming strangers again. You're barely convincing yourself, let alone him, but he won't push you on it.

Your night terrors make him anxious, but he tries so hard. He keeps asking you questions in futile attempts to understand what's racking your mind, but you consistently shut him down. He doesn't know why you wake up with sweat dripping from your forehead every single night, but at some point, he stops asking. He just calls and tries to make you feel better. Tries to help you make it through the night, every night.

By God, you weren't wrong when you told Jonathan Byers that he is actually a good guy.

2. used to be

You pride yourself on being a pretty smart girl, but in hindsight, it takes you a while to come to the conclusions that things have changed between you and your little brother's friend's big brother.

Because that's all he used to be.

You'd see him in passing as he came to pick Will up, sometimes gave you a half-hearted greeting, but only if he was sure you were looking at him. He was raised a polite boy, but he was also not the kind of boy who interacted with people when there was a chance it wasn't necessary.

"Jonathan is coming over." Karen had once casually stated a few years ago. You were 12, and back then you didn't really care much for dressing nicely and boys. Or, dressing nicely *for* boys. Yuck, you had better things to do than to worry about boys.

Karen kept herself occupied with the flowers in front of her, but couldn't help but sneak a peek at her daughter, who offered little response to her mother's offhand remark.

"So?" You eventually decided to say. You'd see your mother heave a barely stifled sigh, clearly dropping the matter. It would take a long while before Jonathan's name was mentioned in the Wheeler household again.

It may sound a little harsh, but you spent a large part of your life not really caring for Jonathan Byers, he was just sort of there.

He was Will's older brother. Nothing more, and nothing less.

3. more

There's no time for you to process just how much *more* Jonathan Byers is during the week that Will and Barb go missing.

But if you'd kept a note, you'd scribble on it:

- Determined.
- Stubborn.
- Smart.
- Creative.
- Fiercely loyal.

All admirable traits, really. It sheds a whole different light on Jonathan. Throughout the years, you've developed an image of him that apparently isn't quite right, and as much as you *could* dwell on what you always thought Jonathan would be, you're too busy being swept up in what he actually *is*.

He is so much *more*.

4. sleeping together

You don't know what brought you here.

Better yet, what brought *him* here.

All you know is that you don't regret asking him to come over. You drop your head to the side of your pillow. In the darkness of the night, you can still make out the imperfections on his face. The light acne on his cheeks. The dark circles under his eyes. His disheveled hair.

You bite on your lip momentarily to fight back the urge to run your hand through it, though you do succumb to turning your entire body to rest on your side and face him completely. To take him in with greater attention.

He's sound asleep, but it's still very apparent to you that he spends the majority of his days feeling restless. You can't help but wonder what could cause it. Surely, Jonathan wouldn't have had the proper chance to be a careless teenager when his father left them. Or it could have something to do with Will, who was back with them, but still not quite as safe. A brief flash of anger shoots through you as you note that the Byers just cannot seem to get a break. And Jonathan, he loves his family. He rarely loves anyone, but when he loves, he loves so deeply. He loves and then he hurts so deeply.

Just when you think that to yourself, Jonathan twitches ever so slightly in his sleep, almost as if on cue. He stirs a little and makes a sound that you can only describe as a pained groan, one that is muffled by his slumber.

You find yourself feeling concerned in an instant and all inhibitions you had left to tip toe on the safe side of whatever boundaries you two were playing with fly out the window. You pull your arm from under the covers and place your hand on top of his chest, where you feel it beating wildly. He squirms under your touch, murmurs something that could be a name. You ponder if you should wake him up, but your decision is made for you when he stills under your hand, resuming his sleep in a more serene manner.

You let out a soft sigh of relief, though your hand remains where it is, and there's no part of you that you can call upon to pull it away.

There's something oddly comforting about being Jonathan's comfort.

5. cold bones

This goes on for a few weeks.

Sometimes Jonathan comes over, lies on your bed (not under the covers) and just sleeps. With you. You don't really talk about it. You slip him a note during class with nothing but a question mark on it. He approaches you after class, gives you a silent nod, and then leaves without uttering a word. Later that night, he shows up at your window.

Maybe Jonathan Byers cares about you, you think to yourself one day. He'd drop anything for his family, and now, perhaps, he'd drop anything for you. It surely seems that way when you call him late at night, on a whim, and awkwardly stumble through raspy breaths, telling him that you could really use his company.

He really is an oddity to you.

His presence calms your nerves, though he won't speak a word. His love comes from cold bones, from a cracked heart that preserves space only for a strictly limited amount of people, ones that he could count on one hand. He hides behind a quiet and mysterious exterior but you know that there's a war going on inside of him.

Talking isn't really his strong suit, but after a while, it becomes apparent that something's on his mind. You can't quite put your finger on it, but even though technically nothing has changed, the *vibes* just feel different. He still gives you a wordless acknowledgment and he still appears at your window that night, but when he slips back out the next morning, you feel colder than you felt the night you spent alone, before him.

You're certain that it's not the wind.

6. it does

"We need to talk."

You eventually decide that if anyone has to break the ice, it's you. Because he's Jonathan Byers, and he'd probably be perfectly content with living in silent misery for the rest of his life, but you won't stand for that.

You notice his body stiffening until he slowly turns around to look back at you, looking like a deer caught in the headlights. To be fair, he did manage to avoid you all day until just now in the dark room, with you standing in front of the door, successfully trapping him.

You're not angry at him, but you call him out on avoiding you and he looks down, feeling guilty. You press on, trying to figure out why he won't talk to you, trying to figure *him* out, but all he does is acknowledge the fact that yes, he has been ghosting out, he has been trying to limit interactions with you wherever possible. You can't help but feel hurt by that. He softly says that he's sorry. You know that he means it. But that isn't what matters to you right now.

"I'm not here for an apology. I'm here for answers."

The red lights in the room highlight the way his features change into an expression of even more confusion. You tell him everything that has been on your mind lately, no words unsaid, no thoughts filtered. You get to a point where you feel your cheeks flushing furiously as you tell him how much you need him in your bed.

Thank God you don't say it in those exact words (how embarrassing would that be), but the general message is still pretty clear and he's staring at you with his mouth agape as you hear yourself say, "Doesn't that mean anything to you?"

You're upset. Rightfully so, and it is quick to spark a reaction out of him. "Of course," he says, though not without dropping his gaze just as soon as the two of you make eye contact. "Of course it does."

7. fragile

“Of course it does.”

“I’m just...confused.”

His words come out fragile, and he looks at you as though you’re now holding the power to completely shatter him to bits and pieces in your very hands. After a beat, he looks down at the ground. He’s wearing his heart on his sleeve. It feels very naked to him.

But you appreciate his honesty.

After all, you’ve spent months yourself mulling over the fact that all of a sudden, you simply couldn’t live your life without Jonathan Byers anymore. *Jonathan Byers*. The boy who was dubbed the ‘silent creep’, something you always resented but never enough to actually speak up about it.

All you cared about was being well liked enough (not popular, that was too much) to get noticed by Steve Harrington and his cool friends. You feel a bitterness in your mouth when you think about it now.

“I am, too.” You feel equally fragile around him. It’s all very new to her.

His mouth forms an ‘oh’, but the sound is either non-existent or so soft, that he might as well not have spoken at all. “About what?”

You suck in a deep breath, trying to find your inner strength. You start telling him again. Everything you’ve told him already, like five minutes ago. You find that you don’t mind. He probably needs to hear it again. One more time. And maybe another time after that. Maybe you’re the one who needs to hear it as well. It feels a little bit more real then. So no, you don’t mind at all.

You only mind that he feels like maybe he doesn’t deserve you.

Author's Note:

I usually don't like writing from this POV, but I felt like it was necessary for the type of writing in this case. I hope you enjoyed it regardless, and if you could spare a moment to leave a kudos or comment, that would be greatly appreciated.